

The Business Council for Sustainable Energy

Industry Roundtable on Energy and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Results and Next Steps

*Convened by the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and
the U.S. Agency for International Development*

October 3, 2002

Washington, DC

Event Summary

On October 3, 2002 the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) and the U.S. Agency for International Development convened a industry roundtable on ***“Energy and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Results and Next Steps”*** at the Dewey Ballantine Law Offices in Washington, DC.

The event was designed to facilitate discussions on what happened during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa on energy and public-private partnerships between senior US government representatives and members of the business and environmental community. Building on the conclusions of the Summit, the roundtable aimed to increase the general understanding of what happened and what steps are now being taken to implement sustainable development both domestically and internationally.

Although the event did not aim to reach any conclusions on the effectiveness of the Summit in highlighting and implementing sustainable development objectives, it did serve as an opportunity for those energy industry representatives and members of the environmental community not present during the Summit to learn more about what happened and to be involved in the promotion of various public-private initiatives launched by the government at WSSD. Participants included private sector representatives from the industrial, energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, members of the environmental and finance community along with key government experts from the US and other major WSSD stakeholders.

Introduction

The roundtable was divided into three separate discussions followed by an open dialogue between speakers and audience participants. BCSE President Michael Marvin began with a brief introduction and request that discussions focus not only on what happened at Johannesburg from the broader perspective but also what happened from the US perspective, and ways in which we can move forward collaboratively.

Part 1: A US Government Perspective

Jonathan Margolis, Director of the Office of Policy Coordination and Initiatives in the Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs for the Department of State began discussions by addressing what the government's response was to Johannesburg and the implication of what happened there for the US. Identifying four main events: 1) post-Doha trade discussions, 2) Monterrey finance discussions, 3) WSSD preparatory meetings and 4) WSSD Johannesburg, Margolis highlighted the importance of analyzing what happened in the context of a continuum of these related events. The Summit meetings in Johannesburg put forward the central paradigm of what sustainable development is and should be, stated Margolis, and through the plan of implementation broadly set out the types of activities and projects that should be undertaken by governments. Reaching a consensus on such an expansive set of issues was in itself a great success, Margolis argued, but more so was the fact that discussions between international leaders from over 100 countries were not diverted by other issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict or land reform in Zimbabwe. The question remains, he added, how the UN will manage to develop and push forward the creative action encapsulated in the

implementation document through the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). At present the next meeting for the CSD is scheduled for January 2003.

Dr. Griff Thompson, Director of the Office of Energy and Information Technology at the US Agency for International Development next addressed the major energy outcomes, again emphasizing the importance of viewing WSSD within the evolutionary context of the previous two years, not as an isolated event. In this light, Thompson argued, the energy discussions were successful many months before Johannesburg even happened. Following the ninth meeting of the CSD (CSD-9) Thompson described the increased recognition of energy as central to all areas of sustainable development. As such, the US government saw the broad mention of energy throughout the final text as a success despite the fact that no hard core message was delivered on where, how, and when to implement and how to develop sustainable energy in general.

Following the Summit there has been an increased level of engagement at the senior level within the US government on moving poverty alleviation and energy development forward in the context of type II, public-private partnerships, Thompson stated. "We have embedded in the text the fundamental message that energy is related to all areas and themes of sustainable development and these themes will come alive in the type II partnerships," he confirmed while citing the three main partnership initiatives that the US government is working on: 1) Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP), 2) Healthy Homes and Communities, and 3) Energy Efficiency for Sustainable Development. The US Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Energy Protection Agency (US EPA) and the US Department of Energy (US DOE) are the respective leads on the aforementioned projects. These agencies will work together with other bi-and multilateral funding agencies on a country by country basis to ensure the government's goal of increasing access to energy is implemented in a fast and efficient manner and does not become divorced from other important issues such as education and gender. Referring specifically to the GVEP program Thompson added that the main objective now for the US and other governments is to figure out how to move from the inspirational text to real action. USAID is currently looking for partners to help push GVEP forward and engage in future projects.

Larisa Dobriansky, Deputy Assistant Secretary for National Energy Policy at the US Department of Energy, concluded the government's discussions by further highlighting the partnership activities conducted by the US government under DOE. Again linking WSSD discussions and US government initiatives with past meetings, Dobriansky emphasized the high level of positive engagement and constructive response to the US's work at the G8 energy meeting, APEC and among non-governmental groups, businesses and environmental groups at the Summit itself. The DOE's clean energy initiative "Powering sustainable development from the village to metropolis" was well received and praise for its multifaceted approach to energy efficiency that aims to help alleviate poverty by modernizing energy supply and increasing efficiency of energy production, Dobriansky stated. She also confirmed that the US government had joined forces with Australia and their APEC initiative to remove lead from gasoline within the Asia Pacific area and to modernize energy in developing countries, and that the US was holding discussions with the governments of Japan, Canada, New Zealand, Iceland, and Mexico to coordinate similar regional and government-government partnerships. Domestically, DOE is focusing on a three to four month evaluation period of business partners and two events that will move forward their initiative at the city-state level.

Part 2: The Business Perspective

Jim Wolf, Vice President of the American Standard/Trane Company and member of the BCSE WSSD delegation continued discussions by presenting the Council's and businesses' in general perspective of what happened in Johannesburg. Along with other members of the Council, American Standard/Trane had already been involved in the continuum of events held in the lead-up to the Summit. However, Wolf stated many companies were still surprised at the level of attention that was drawn to energy during the meetings and impressed by what was included in the final text on energy. He added that specific consideration related to energy weren't included in the text such as the removal of energy market distortions and the setting of goals and objectives to help promote investment and emphasize energy efficiency. Despite the good tone of the document the text was not comprehensive enough to implement, Wolf added that the private sector reacts to goals and timetables; they equate these with business and profit he concluded.

Part 3: An Environmental NGO Perspective

Chris Flavin, President of Worldwatch Institute, next presented the environmental perspective on WSSD. In general agreement with Wolf's assessment of the Summit, good text in areas but weak overall when it comes to implementation, Flavin focused his discussions on the debated issues of timetables and renewable energy targets. Why had this become such a symbolic fight in Johannesburg, Flavin questioned, and why if the WSSD implementation document had no legally binding ability did other countries feel so strongly to fight against it? Even if it was unrealistic to assume that a global energy target could be negotiated Flavin argued the fight itself was symbolic as it represented a new level of discussions about clean and renewable energy. "The politics of energy are beginning to shift," he continued, "renewable energy technologies are coming of age and negotiations are no longer breaking down the traditional north south lines. The G77 is fraying at the edges with Brazil leading the charge on targets, supported by Mexico (a large oil producer) with little or no opposition from China." To end this debate on targets Flavin supported the move to policy implementation and action at the national level.

Concluding Remarks and Group Discussion

After a brief wrap up of the discussions the floor was opened for questions from other participants. Concerns were raised by environmental representatives over the success of the type-II partnerships in promoting sustainable development, comparing discussions on these in Johannesburg to the proverbial "blind men and the elephant" story. This notion was generally supported by other industrial representatives who on the one hand supported the success of the Summit meetings in pushing forward the energy agenda but on the other also acknowledged that sustainable energy development can not exist outside the rubric of an open energy market. In response to these questions, government representatives confirmed that there is a need for increased public participation and discussion on these issues to ensure that real commitment, accountability and responsibility is given to achieving sustainable development. The Council will continue to serve as a facilitator for this purpose.

Created in 1992, the BCSE is an industry trade group comprised of companies and industry trade associations in the energy efficiency, natural gas, renewable energy, independent power and electric utility industries. The Council emphasizes market-based approaches as models for efforts to reduce pollutants. In addition, the Council works on international financing, climate change mitigation, tax issues and global market development. "Partnering with Business" is a three-year project aimed at promoting the expansion of markets for sustainable energy technologies in developing countries and economies in transition. As part of this project, the BCSE convenes industry roundtables and seminars for international audiences on market development issues to strengthen relationships with the private sector and communicates best practices in clean energy technologies and use. The October 3, 2002 industry roundtable was supported by USAID, Office of Energy and Information Technology as part of the Partnering with Business Project.

Industry Roundtable on Energy and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Results and Next Steps

Participant List

Moderator

Michael Marvin

Business Council for Sustainable Energy

Speakers

Larisa Dobriansky

US Department of Energy

Christopher Flavin

Worldwatch Institute

Jonathan Margolis

US Department of State

Griff Thompson

US Agency for International Development

James Wolf

American Standard/Trane

Industry

Debbie Bleviss

Consultant

Hap Boyd

GE Wind Energy

Bosworth Dewey

IIEC/CERF

Neal Elliott

ACEEE

Tom Jacob

DuPont

Denise Knight

IIEC/CERF

Andrew Kruse

Southwest WindPower

Arize Nweke

NREL

Erin Pierce

Plug Power

Russell Profozich

Nexant

Sridhar Samudrala

US Energy Association

Judy Siegel

Energy and Security

Mary Shaffer

Everygreen Solar

Debby Stone

US Hydropower Council for International Development

Government

Tim Lattimer

US Department of State

Jonathan Temple

British Embassy

Finance

John Butler

Booz Allen Hamilton

Todd Morath

Delphos International

Environmental Community

Nyaguthii Chege

NRDC

Hilary Hoffman

GLOBE USA

Julia Philpott

World Resource Institute

Jacob Scherr

NRDC

Carol Werner

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

BCSE Staff

Zoë Dawson

Sharon Singh

John Garrison